



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Kootenai NF

Shadle

copy to

2350 General Forest Environment Areas

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subject

Review Draft, Proposed Supplement to FSM 2353

To:

Regional Forester

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For the past few years, the Kootenai had a travel map covering the Forest at 3/8" = 1 mile. Last year we ran out of these, and at that time decided to discontinue the display of Forest-wide travel restrictions, for several reasons: 1) we simply couldn't keep it up to date. The Kootenai initiated about 320 miles of new road restrictions in FY '83, and we foresee repeating this in each of the next several years. 2) The Forest-wide travel map was relatively expensive, as most user publics are only concerned with one or two Districts on the Forest, making the rest of the map unnecessary. 3) The 3/8" scale was getting too cluttered for legibility, and would keep getting more so as we added new roads and closures.

Six months ago we completed an exhaustive effort of revising our Forest Visitor Map. In this revision we attempted to make the map just as accurate as possible and at the same time strongly emphasize the important recreational features on the Kootenai that the public is really interested in. Anticipated delivery date for these maps is FY '85. Twenty thousand (20,000) copies of the map have been ordered and we expect that supply to last several years. Adding road closures to this map would cause the map to be so complex and cluttered that it would not be valuable to the public. To reduce the scale to 3/8" would virtually make the map unusable.

Based on these reasons, we decided last spring to use our existing series of 1/2" District maps as the vehicle to keep our publics informed of our travel management policies. So far the Libby and Cabinet Districts, two of our most active in terms of road management, have added travel information to their existing District maps, using a second color (see enclosed maps). These have proved successful beyond expectation--we've had nothing but favorable public comment (on both the map and the closure philosophy behind it), and those District personnel involved with the closures--hunting season patrols, field going crews, etc.--think it's great.

There are several reasons why these maps seem to be working so well on the Kootenai: 1) they are a large, easy to read scale, while maintaining a small, easy to use size; 2) they are very inexpensive (the total cost for all seven Districts would be no more than the per copy cost of our multicolor 1/2" Forest map); 3) the maps can be produced locally--within 10 days of revising; and most importantly, 4) these District maps respond more quickly and efficiently to on-the-ground needs and changes. Our road management policies need to be flexible and responsive to resource and public needs. I expect a relatively significant number of road closure changes every year, changes that only an inexpensive map such as is enclosed could accommodate.



Other positive benefits we are discovering through the use of these maps include a better capability for predicting the quantities necessary between revisions, and the fact that our geometronics staff can more easily deal with District sized revisions (some Districts change very little--for others, both road building and closing are very dynamic).


We must strongly emphasize that we do not have "area restrictions" on the Kootenai (except the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness, which is well marked on all maps). With our terrain and vegetation, road and trail restrictions adequately protect areas needing it, and we have never really had an off-road vehicle problem to address. Our message to the public is which roads are open and which are closed. This changes yearly depending on resource activities and needs. We must have a map that can be revised annually.

We are deeply concerned with the direction the proposed supplement would take us. Our principle concerns are these:

1. We have been successfully "soft-selling" road closures on the Forest. Charging \$1 for a map displaying travel information which would undoubtedly be out of date within a year of publication would have a negative impact on our I&E program. Our goal is to get travel information into the hands of as many users as possible, for their sake and ours. To charge for a travel map to a large degree defeats this purpose. To charge for a recreation visitors map is highly appropriate since the objectives are somewhat different.
2. Our 1/2" map is extremely popular and understandable, but adding another layer of information would seriously increase the complexity.
3. There is simply no way we can hope to maintain an accurate map with anything much less than annual revisions, and we have no reason to believe that revision scheduling will improve beyond the current 6-8 years. The costs of an annual revision would be prohibitive, were it possible.

We see some potential graphic problems within the proposed supplement. We recently received 5000 reprint Forest visitors maps from a contract printer which were poor in color control, and would indicate that a system using as many as five tints of green may be too complex and subtle. Using the color red for restricted roads and trails may be overkill in terms of attention getting, and also adds a note of confusion, since open roads, recreation sites, and other recreation information have historically been red.

We feel that proposed supplement 2355.22 will have a significant negative impact on current KNF policy and philosophy of travel management, at a point when our program is dramatically expanding in a positive fashion. Accordingly, we propose to stay on track with the popular Recreation Visitor Map scheduled for FY '85, as well as moving forward with the highly flexible and widely accepted management tool of District Travel Maps. We hope you will support this concept also.

  
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Forest Supervisor

Enclosure